



Embassy of the United States of America
Port Louis, Mauritius
PRESS RELEASE

American Corner: Partnership renewed

Port Louis, February 21, 2013: The Ambassador of the United States of America, Shari Villarosa, and the Mayor of Curepipe, Mario Bienvenu, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) today. Municipal counselors of the town of Curepipe, MP and leader of the Mouvement Mauricien Social Démocrate (MMSD), Eric Guimbeau, and other guests also attended the signature. This MOU between the U.S. Embassy and the Municipality of Curepipe reinforces the partnership of both parties regarding the American Corner located in the Carnegie Library. After the signature, Ambassador Villarosa visited the library where she was shown some rare and unique manuscripts like the "*Code Noir*".

The American Corner at the Carnegie Library of Curepipe was inaugurated in 2010. The American Corners Program is an initiative launched and sponsored by United States Department more than 10 years ago. American Corners are partnerships with local institutions. Enthusiasm for American Corners continues to grow as more visitors are exposed to their benefits. The choice of the Carnegie Library as host for this center is also highly symbolic of the long-standing ties between the U.S. and Mauritius. Founded in 1905, it was constructed from funds – about \$ 8,000 – donated by the American Andrew Carnegie Foundation.

The American Corner in Mauritius has been named the 'Harper Lee Center' for the author of the classic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which regularly features on secondary school Literature in English programs in Mauritius. The Harper Lee Center currently has about 500 books – for lending and reference – for children and adults on literature, history, government, environment, politics and a wide range of subjects by American authors. Fiction as well as reference material and several guides on higher education in the U.S. are available in the center. The Harper Lee Center also has two computer terminals donated by the U.S. Embassy. The Harper Lee Center is replenished and serviced by the Embassy. The Municipal Council provides the space and infrastructure. The American Corner will soon be a wifi zone and kindles (e-readers) will be available for members. Membership to the American Corner is free.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

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Activities are organized every month at the American Corner. On the 19th and 21st of March, a screening of the movie “Rosa Parks” is scheduled. Those who want to attend need to sign up by calling at the American Corner beforehand.

American Corners in the world

Almost 400 American Corners in about 60 countries have been launched since 2000. There are currently 413 American Corners in the world: 164 in Europe and Eurasia, 59 in East Asia, 75 in Africa, 43 in South and Central Asia, 50 in the Middle East, and 22 in Latin America. 18 are under way. American Corners are dedicated information spaces hosted in schools, libraries, and other partner institutions worldwide. They help introduce visitors to the “*true story of the United States*”. By providing a multifunctional platform for public diplomacy programs and offering access to print, multimedia, and other materials, the American Corners help maintain open dialogue, counteract negative preconceptions, and build bridges of understanding. The heart of the American Corner is the commitment to provide public diplomacy programs that engage various local audiences: visiting speakers discuss U.S. global policies; exchange students share their experiences in the United States; Digital Video Conferences cover sensitive but important issues such as HIV/AIDS and human trafficking. IIP created poster shows and other exhibits illustrate the diversity of American society.

Who is Andrew Carnegie

Andrew Carnegie was born on November 25, 1835, in Dunfermline, Scotland. Although he had little former education, Carnegie grew up in a family where they believed in the importance of books and learning. Son of a handloom weaver, Andrew Carnegie grew up to become one of the wealthiest businessman in America. In 1901, he made a dramatic change in his life. He sold his business for more than \$ 200 million. Some years earlier, he had started doing philanthropic work and since then and until his death, that’s what he mostly did. In 1901, he donated approximately \$5 million to the New York Public Library so that the library could open several branches. He made numerous other donations and it is said that more than 2,800 libraries were opened with his support.

Contact details:

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